

## GENERAL NOTES

Conducted by M. H. Swenk

**Woodcock and Whistling Swan in Iowa.**—On March 26, 1936, I flushed an American Woodcock (*Philohela minor*) in the Backbone Park, Delaware County, Iowa. On the following day I noted seven Whistling Swans (*Cygnus columbianus*) on Swan Lake, in Johnson County, Iowa. Mr. E. B. Speaker, Field Supervisor of Fisheries, was with me on both occasions and also noted these birds. We took pictures of these birds observed in Johnson county.—W. W. AITKEN, *Iowa Conservation Commission, Des Moines, Iowa.*

**The Mute Swan and European Widgeon in Ohio.**—A Mute Swan (*Sthenelides olor*) was observed by Mrs. Skaggs and the writer at Gordon Park in a small area of open water in Lake Erie on January 26, 1936. The bird was with a number of Lesser Scaups and was about 150 feet from the observers. Since this species has established itself in the East in a wild state, the bird may have been one of that type. No escapes have been reported from this region. Dr. S. C. Kendeigh also saw the swan, but it was in flight and he did not get to see the bill, so took it for a Whistling Swan.

On March 28, 1936, several members of the Cleveland Bird Club, including the writer, saw an European Widgeon (*Mareca penelope*) on the lake of the Sherwin estate, near Willoughby, Ohio. The bird was observed under perfect conditions and was a male in good plumage. Mrs. Sherwin saw the bird first on March 26. On March 29 it was not to be found. There are very few records for this bird in Ohio.—MERIT B. SKAGGS, *Cleveland, Ohio.*

**Do Herons Use Their Beaks as Spears?**—In the March, 1936, number of the WILSON BULLETIN is an article on "Bird Life in Green Bay", by L. E. Hunter of Dallas City, Illinois, in which he says the Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) stabs fish with its bill. I wonder if this can be proved. I once found a Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax hoactli*) with a broken wing. It shrieked fiercely and struck at my dog with open beak, and all the feathers raised on its neck. I called the dog off and it remained perfectly quiet while I picked it up and carried it some distance, but on seeing the dog, it again showed fight and struck at my throat. Luckily for me it did not strike spear fashion, but with open beak, making two scratches about an inch long, one on each side of my throat. It was a young bird in the immature plumage. But in the days of falconry, herons were supposed to be more or less dangerous to the attacking hawks and naturally one would suppose this meant using the bill as a spear.—WILLIAM P. HAINSWORTH, *North Andover, Mass.*

**The Harris's Sparrow in East-Central Illinois.**—In the paper on the Harris's Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*) by Myron H. Swenk and O. A. Stevens, published in the September, 1929, number of the WILSON BULLETIN, it is indicated that in Illinois, except in the southeastern portion, this sparrow occurs fairly regularly, especially in the vicinity of Lake Michigan. However, in the east-central portion of the state, in the vicinity of Champaign and Urbana, it has been noted but eight times in the last quarter century. Of these records, the greater number fall in April and May, and in October, as would be expected. It was my pleasure to record this bird for the first time at Mahomet, Champaign County, Illinois, on March 3, 1936. There are other March records for Illinois, although they are few in number, as mentioned in the above paper. The bird